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THE BATTLE OF COOK'S MILLS

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THE BATTLE OF COOK'S MILLS AND THE
DEDICATION OF ITS MONUMENT



WELLAND, CANADA.
Tribune-Telegraph Press
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*The most critical and most ominous period for Canada was
the last few weeks, ending October 19th, 1814, at Cook's Mills.*

—R. W. GEARY.

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Kennedy's Lane Hist. Soc.
5.22.23*

THE Peninsular Counties that touch the Niagara River fairly bristle with history, and are scarcely less bristling with books, pamphlets and papers dealing with the themes of that history, yet it has remained for the year nineteen hundred and twenty-three and this little brochure to give the Battle of Cook's Mills its first exclusive publication. The name is mentioned, of course, in most stories and records of the War of 1812-14, and Cruikshank in his "Documentary History" has preserved to the future the official statements concerning the engagement, but Cook's Mills has not until now stood alone. It would seem, indeed, that this fight that centered around the flour mills owned by the Cook brothers, Noah and Calvin, and situated in the very heart of what is now the County of Welland, has taken almost a century and decade to come into its own. Its recognition now is probably as slender as it is tardy, but it is a recognition.

The immediate, modern thing back of this little book was the unveiling of the monument on the battlefield a few weeks ago.

—LOUIS BLAKE DUFF.



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COOK'S MILLS, YESTERDAY AND TODAY

By Ernest Green.

HAT sense of peace ever present amid scenes of rustic beauty steals inevitably over the heart and mind of the traveller who follows the old Lyons' Creek Road from Chippawa towards Welland. The roadway has the twists and curves peculiar to all pioneer trails, yielding to every convolution of the land and keeping the slow-winding stream its constant guide and companion. Rich fields, deep in grain and clover, stretch to the open woodlands that bound the view; cool flats, waving with reeds and sedges, alternate with placid lily-pools along the water-course, while, here and there, modest farm-steadings tell of an industrious rural race, sprung from stock long native to this soil. Peace and beauty, plenty and contentment rule the heart of Welland County today, but times have been when hardship, war and a great ambition each in turn disturbed this deep serenity.

When the revolution that rent a great people in twain had run its course and the dispossessed Loyalists plunged into a forest-clad wilderness to make for themselves new homes, these level plains of Crowland heard their first axes and saw their first stump-encircled log houses. Among the stumps grew scanty grain, but when the labors of seed-time and harvest were finished the pioneer had still the toil of the journey to some distant mill. The gentle, slow stream shortened the way for him but the pack-trail and the paddle yet took heavy toll of his strength and his days.

Then came Noah and Calvin Cook, men of enterprise and vision. Where the stream, drawing out of a deep reach, rippled across a shallow, they built their dam of clay and sluice of axe-hewn timber. There rose their rustic wheel, and "Cook's Mills" was born. Not one of those great towns whose smokes now smear the horizon

had yet been dreamed of. Beaverdams and Bridgewater were the contemporaries of the hamlet that grew up around this little industry in the depths of the forest. Together they rose; together they fell. Each had its taste of battle, each had its day of pride, each drained the dregs of adversity, and now all alike are history.

Years passed on. The settlement thrived, and lonely exiles grew to love the new land. Then came war again, and these men of old Lincoln stood gallantly at bay on many fields in defence of homes and allegiance. The boom of cannon rolled oft across the forest from hard-fought frays, eastward and north and south; and at last, one day, even this quiet spot by the creekside was the scene of strife and death. Here, where the modest cairn tells its story, Canadian volunteer and British regular disputed the way with invading foes. Musketry and cannon pealed across these quiet vales, smoke rolled thick along the forest edge and leaden balls hailed upon log houses whose occupants had fled in terror to the depths of the wilderness. The story of that day is told in another place. On the brow of the bluff that marks the valley's farther edge the slain were laid to rest and only tradition now points out the spot.

The war was ended and Cook's Mills thrived in peace. Here the people met for worship, for the regulation of the town affairs and for the selection of their representatives in parliament. Here they brought their products of field and garden, loom and dairy to show in friendly competition with their neighbors. To the eye of this century it was all very small and mean,—that hamlet of a hundred years ago,—but that was Cook's Mills' golden time and from such primitive institutions of industry and government as flourished here the prosperity and power of twentieth century Canada have sprung.

Time passed and rival powers arose,—a canal on that side, a railroad on this; towns and trade were all about but still the village flourished. Then came the day when old Lincoln County, grown great and unwieldly, was to

These men of old Lincoln stood gallantly at bay on many fields in defence of homes and allegiance.

be divided, and Cook's Mills found itself the geographical centre of the new county-area of Welland. "Of course," said the folk, "this must be the county town," and they selected the court-house site. But rival villages bid for the honor and, after bitter strife, one of them carried off the prize. It was Cook's Mills' death-blow.

The mills are gone and the dam is but a shapeless mound of clay; the village industries hum no longer; the old shops and public-houses are closed; clumps of lilac and liveforever by the fences alone show where happy homes once stood. The muskrat and redwing hold sway among the reeds and lillies once more and only the gray cairn reminds the traveller that here a tale may be told.

The gray cairn reminds the traveller that here a tale may be told.



THE STORY OF THE DEDICATION

*Reprinted from the Welland Tribune and Telegraph of July 26,
1923.*



EW events in the recent history of the county have been of such inspiring interest as that which took place at Cook's Mills yesterday afternoon—the unveiling and dedication of a monument to mark the scene of the battle, the last action in this section of Canada in the war of 1812-14.

The monument, erected on the site of the battleground on land donated by Roy Matthews, is the work of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Ottawa. The unveiling and dedicatory ceremonies were carried out very admirably by the Lundy's Lane Historical Society. Appropriately enough, the day was the anniversary of the Battle of Lundy's Lane.

The monument faces the Crowland stone road, and is situated about one-half mile east of the Crowland Town Hall. On a concrete base seven feet square is erected a pyramidal cairn of rubble stone eleven feet high. The tablet faces south and looks upon the roadway. Embedded in the mortar above the tablet are two bullets and two arrow-heads. The bullets were turned up in the soil almost on the exact site of the monument only a few weeks ago by Mr. Matthews. So the monument bears its own relics of 1812-14. The monument was built by Wm. Justice of Thorold, under the direction of J. H. Byrne, Ottawa, engineer of the National Parks Branch, Department of the Interior.

The monument was unveiled by Mrs. L. B. Spencer, Regent of Sir Isaac Brock Chapter, Daughters of the Empire, Welland; and below the tablet a memorial wreath was placed by Mrs. C. H. Vandersluys, regent of Niagara Rangers Chapter, Niagara Falls.

The chair was occupied by Rev. Dr. Wallis of Niagara Falls, Vice-President of the Lundy's Lane Historical

Bullets and arrow heads from the soil.

Society. The address of the day was that made by Brig.-Gen. E. A. Cruikshank, Chairman of the Historic Sites and Monuments Board, of Ottawa, one of Canada's foremost historians, and one especially well steeped in the lore of the war of 1812-14. General Cruikshank, with the sure touch of an authority, described the action at Cook's Mills and gave it proper setting in the events that preceded and followed. Of first interest, too, was the very brief address of R. W. Geary, President of Lundy's Lane Historical Society.

The impressive dedicatory prayer was said by Rev. Archdeacon Perry, rector of Holy Trinity Church, Welland.

The program included many excellent addresses. Horace Gray, Reeve of the Township of Crowland, extended a hearty welcome to the visitors. W. M. German, K.C., M.P., Col. J. E. Cohoe, J. W. Marshall, B.A., Inspector of Schools, and Louis Blake Duff spoke briefly.

The tenor of the speeches was one of gratitude to the defenders of our soil, of thankfulness that good neighborliness had marked our relationship with the United States for over a century, and that Canadians of this day should dedicate themselves to the maintenance of Canada as an integral part of the British Empire.

The deep interest of the proceedings together with the fair summer day brought out a very large attendance from all parts of the county. Included in the audience were the following members of the Niagara Historical Society: Mrs. E. J. Thompson, Mrs. John Redhead, Mrs. F. D. Porter and Mrs. E. C. Ascher. Mrs. J. B. Simpson of Ottawa, long prominent in the work of preserving Canadian history, was also present.

About the monument were hung banners bearing the names of the military units that took part in the Battle of Cook's Mills—the 82nd, the 100th, the 104th, the Royal Artillery and the Glengarry Light Infantry.

Flags were placed at each corner of the enclosure by Mrs. C. L. Coulson, Secretary of Sir Isaac Brock Chap-

*A dedication to
the maintenance of
Canada as an in-
tegral part of the
British Empire.*

ter. Flags on the monument are to be maintained year to year by the Chapter.

The Boys' Naval Brigade of Welland, under mand of Horace Cox, attended in a body, and the s tions given by their bugle band were one of the b features of the occasion.



DEDICATORY PRAYER

By Rev. Archdeacon N. I. Perry, Rector of Holy Trinity Church,
Welland.



LET us now praise the memory of men who gave their lives, a willing sacrifice for their country.

"Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."

"These are they that came out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore they stand before the throne of God and praise Him day and night in His temple. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. The sun shall not light upon them nor any heat—for the Lamb that is in the midst of the Throne shall lead them unto the fountain of living waters and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

Let us pray—

O God of our fathers, who in olden times didst command Thy servants to erect a stone of remembrance, hear now our prayers as we dedicate a stone of everlasting witness of the unseen things by which men and nations live. Grant that this pillar builded with the precious stones of human lives, formed together by courage and sacrifice, may be precious in Thy sight, and honored by our children forever.

We praise Thy glorious Name for the men who in this place long ago gave their lives in defence of their country. Thou has accepted, O Lord, the offering of their faithfulness unto death and hast given to us their children, a glorious heritage.

May this pillar erected to their memory be a symbol of Thee in whose comforting and keeping there is shelter from the storm. Write upon the tablet of our hearts the truth that life is not measured by length of days. Help us to feel that in Thy holy care art all Thy children,

*Praise the memory
of men who gave
their lives.*

whether here or beyond, that Thou, the Eternal God, art our refuge and strength here and everywhere. As in Thy Name we dedicate this Pillar in memory of those who died, so we pray Thee, dedicate all our lives to Thy glory and service through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

O Lord God Almighty, Supreme Ruler of Nations, without whom no people can be great; we thank Thee for the progress and prosperity vouchsafed to this Dominion, and for the countless blessings, temporal and spiritual. Make us, we beseech Thee, more sensible of Thy goodness, and of our responsibility as stewards of Thy gifts, and grant us such virtue and true religion that, by our work and by our lives, Thy Holy Name may be forever glorified, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.



THE ACTION AT COOK'S MILLS.

*An Address by Brigadier-General E. A. Cruikshank, LL.D.,
F.R.S.C., F.R.H.S., Chairman of the Historic Sites and
Monuments Board of Canada.*

 HIS monument has been erected here by the Department of the Interior to commemorate the Battle of Cook's Mills, an event of some significance in the history of Canada. It was the last action of any importance fought in Upper Canada during the war of 1812-14. The war had been continued for exactly twenty-eight months. It also marked the end of the most sternly contested and bloodiest campaign of that war, which began on July 3rd of that year and all but completed the devastation of this frontier. The events of that campaign may be briefly stated.

The invasion was undertaken with the hope of over-running the province as far as Burlington Heights, or perhaps Toronto, and retaking Fort Niagara. The landing of a body of about five thousand men, mostly regular troops, was aided by a squadron of war-ships in undisputed command of Lake Erie, and the co-operation of a more powerful fleet on Lake Ontario was arranged for when the invaders had fought their way to its shores. Fort Erie was taken with scarcely a show of resistance, and an ill-judged attack by an inferior British brigade near Chippawa was sharply repelled with severe loss.

The fortifications at Chippawa and on Queenston Heights were then abandoned and, after leaving sufficient garrisons in the three forts at the mouth of Niagara river, the remainder of the British field-force retired toward Burlington. The invaders advanced to Queenston Heights and waited there for two weeks for the fleet which failed to come to their support. Until this time all their supplies had been brought to them by boats from the other side of the river. Learning that he could not rely on receiving any naval assistance for some time, their com-

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mander decided to retire as far as Chippawa, with the intention of forming a supply-train and moving across country against Burlington, then the chief military depot in the western part of this province.

The unexpected advance of a small British force to Lundy's Lane, within striking distance, precipitated a hard-fought battle there, which began an hour before sunset and lasted until midnight. The losses on both sides were heavy and those of the invaders were so severe that they retreated in haste to Fort Erie, where they formed an entrenched camp and awaited reinforcements in the hope of being able to resume the offensive. This position was besieged by a slightly larger British force under Sir Gordon Drummond, and, after a few days' bombardment, a resolute assault was made on the night of August 14 and 15. This attack failed with the loss of nine hundred men. The siege was continued in the face of great difficulties for more than a month longer. The defence was obstinate and skilful but the chief antagonists of the besiegers were incessant rain and almost unfathomable mud, which made the transport of all supplies a task of enormous labor and wore the men out.

Being secretly reinforced by night by large bodies of volunteers and militia, the garrison made a vigorous sortie under cover of mist and rain, took several siege batteries and many prisoners, and although eventually driven in, inflicted such heavy loss that Drummond reluctantly raised the siege and retreated behind the Chippawa Creek. He had then learned that a fresh force of regular troops, estimated at five thousand men, was advancing from Sackett's Harbor on Lake Ontario, by a route threatening Fort Niagara and his line of communication. Its arrival would give his enemy a great numerical superiority, and for many days he was menaced with attacks at the same time in front and upon his left flank.

The march of this division was, however, much retarded by rain and bad roads, and it did not arrive at Lewiston until October 5. The design of besieging Fort

Niagara was then abandoned and a junction formed with the troops at Fort Erie on October 10 and 11. The united force of eight thousand men advanced as far as Black Creek on October 13. Drummond's effective strength was less than half as large, but the field works on the north side of Chippawa Creek and in the angle formed by the confluence of Lyons' Creek with that stream had been much improved and the water was high in both. His position there was bombarded by field artillery on October 15 with little effect.

During the whole of the next day strong columns of infantry were paraded about in sight, but out of range of gun-fire. On the afternoon of October 17, the whole American force retreated and again encamped at Black Creek for the night. Early next morning Drummond learned that a long column was marching up Black Creek towards Cook's Mills. The Glengarry Light Infantry and seven companies of the 82nd Regiment were advanced along the left bank of Lyons' Creek to protect his right flank from what seemed to be a serious attempt to turn it. Before night he was informed that the enemy had actually crossed Lyons' Creek in force and occupied the mills. These troops were at once reinforced with three companies of the 100th Regiment and one field gun.

Colonel Christopher Myers, their commander, was ordered to "feel the enemy" closely, so as accurately to ascertain their strength and the direction of their movement and enable Drummond to take measures for counter-ing any attempt to penetrate in the direction of Burlington by the Beaver Dams. He was warned that any miscalculation in this respect might imperil the safety of the entire division, and instructed to refrain from attacking a very superior force. Orders were sent at the same time to destroy Brown's Bridge, the only means of crossing the Chippawa above, and a regiment of militia was marched towards it to oppose any attempt to force a passage there.

*The march to
Cook's Mills.*

The American force at Cook's Mills consisted of four regiments of infantry, a company of riflemen, and a party of dragoons, probably numbering upwards of twelve hundred of all ranks, under Brigadier-General Daniel Bissell. A militia picket at the mill had been driven off and its officer captured. During the night an American advanced picket posted on the road to Chippawa was attacked and lost a man taken prisoner.

Myers advanced early in the morning of October 19 from Misener's house on Lyons' Creek, described as three miles distant from this place, with a force stated at about 750 men. This movement was led by the Glengarry Light Infantry, a distinguished regiment raised in Canada and chiefly recruited in the county from which it derived its name. It bore the burden and heat of the conflict. The result of his reconnoissance was tersely related by Myers in the following manner—

"I found the enemy's advance with a strong support posted on the right bank of a ravine, which runs to Lyons' Creek, a small distance from the Mills. A part of the Glengarry Regiment turned round a small wood which covered the front of the enemy and crossed the head of the ravine, whilst the remainder passed through the wood. By this movement the enemy's light troops were driven back in admirable style, whilst a part of his force crossed Lyons' Creek for the purpose of annoying our left. Having chiefly the reconnoissance in view, and finding that object not attainable by a forward movement from the thickness of the woods, I retired the Glengarry Regiment and fell back a small distance, in the hope of drawing the enemy forth to the open ground, and, if circumstances would justify it, to bring him to a more general action. This had no farther the desired effect than that he advanced to the skirts of the wood, and showed two columns on our left and one on our right, opening a fire of small arms and which from the distance we sparingly returned, but from the fire of the six-pounder and the rockets the enemy's column on our left suffered sev-

Colonel Myers' report on the action at Cook's Mills.

erely. From my own observation and the reports I have received, I cannot estimate the force of the enemy at less than from 1,500 to 2,000 men. He had no cannon. Finding it impossible to draw him fairly from the woods, I retired the troops to their cantonments around the place, [Misener's house], keeping my advance close to the enemy.

"The conduct of the Glengarry Light Infantry during this campaign has been so conspicuous that Lieutenant-Colonel Battersby and the officers and men of that corps can receive little further credit from any report of mine, but on this occasion I cannot refrain from adding my humble tribute of praise to their well-earned fame."

His loss was one man killed and thirty-five wounded, some of whom died of their wounds. The only officer wounded was Captain Alexander MacMillan of the Glengarry Light Infantry.

Bissell reported the loss of twelve men killed, fifty-four wounded, including four officers, and one prisoner. After destroying a small quantity of grain stored in the mill, he retired hastily next day, by the route over which he had advanced, although he had been reinforced during the night by two more regiments of infantry, leaving the bridges undamaged. On October 21, the whole invading army retired to Fort Erie and soon after recrossed the Niagara.

Thus the last shots of that campaign were fired and "the battle-flags were furled." A good many lives were sacrificed elsewhere before that fratricidal contest between kindred peoples was ended. Let us hope that it may never be renewed. But let us not forget the heroic dead, nor the events which have preserved our country and enabled it to attain the dignity of nationhood.

It is hoped that the establishment of these memorials may help to promote sound patriotism, may stimulate the study of national history, and may interest the traveller.

The whole invading army retired to Fort Erie and soon recrossed the Niagara.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF COOK'S MILLS IN THE FORTUNES OF THE WAR

An Address by R. W. Geary, President of the Lundy's Lane Historical Society.

The most critical and most ominous period for Canada was the last few weeks ending October 19th, 1814, at Cook's Mills.

The check received here by the American army, was of the greatest importance to our country's defenders.

The most critical and most ominous period for Canada of the whole war was the last few weeks, ending October 19th, 1814, at Cook's Mills, the anxieties of General Drummond being frequently shown in his official despatches of that time; and, had it not been that the Chippawa river was "an exceedingly strong defensive position" to use Drummond's own words, combined with his own vigilance and military skill, the last and greatest American invading army would have undoubtedly overwhelmed us, and the fairest of Canadian land, the historical Niagara Peninsula, occupied, and, without doubt, claimed and held by the United States when the war was over.

The forming of General Izard's new army in Western New York, its junction with General Brown's, after relieving Fort Erie, the falling back of Drummond behind the Chippawa, with his head-quarters at Niagara Falls, the fortifying of the Chippawa and the mouth of Lyons' Creek, the disposition of the British forces, the signals, in event of an attack at Chippawa, of three cannons to be fired, one minute apart, on Drummond Hill, and repeated at Queenston, to bring the troops stationed at Lundy's Lane, Queenston, and the forts at the mouth of the River at once to Chippawa,—all constitute, in detail, one of the most dramatic chapters in Canadian history.

This period of stress really brought out Drummond's finest generalship, and I hope to see a monument erected to his memory on this Frontier, commensurate in importance with the greatness of his services to Canada in the war of 1812-14.

The erection and dedication of these permanent re-

cards in bronze and stone, of the past achievements of patriotic Britons will be of great educative influence to succeeding generations, in promoting the memory of the glorious traditions of the British Empire expressed so well in Henley's fine lines:—

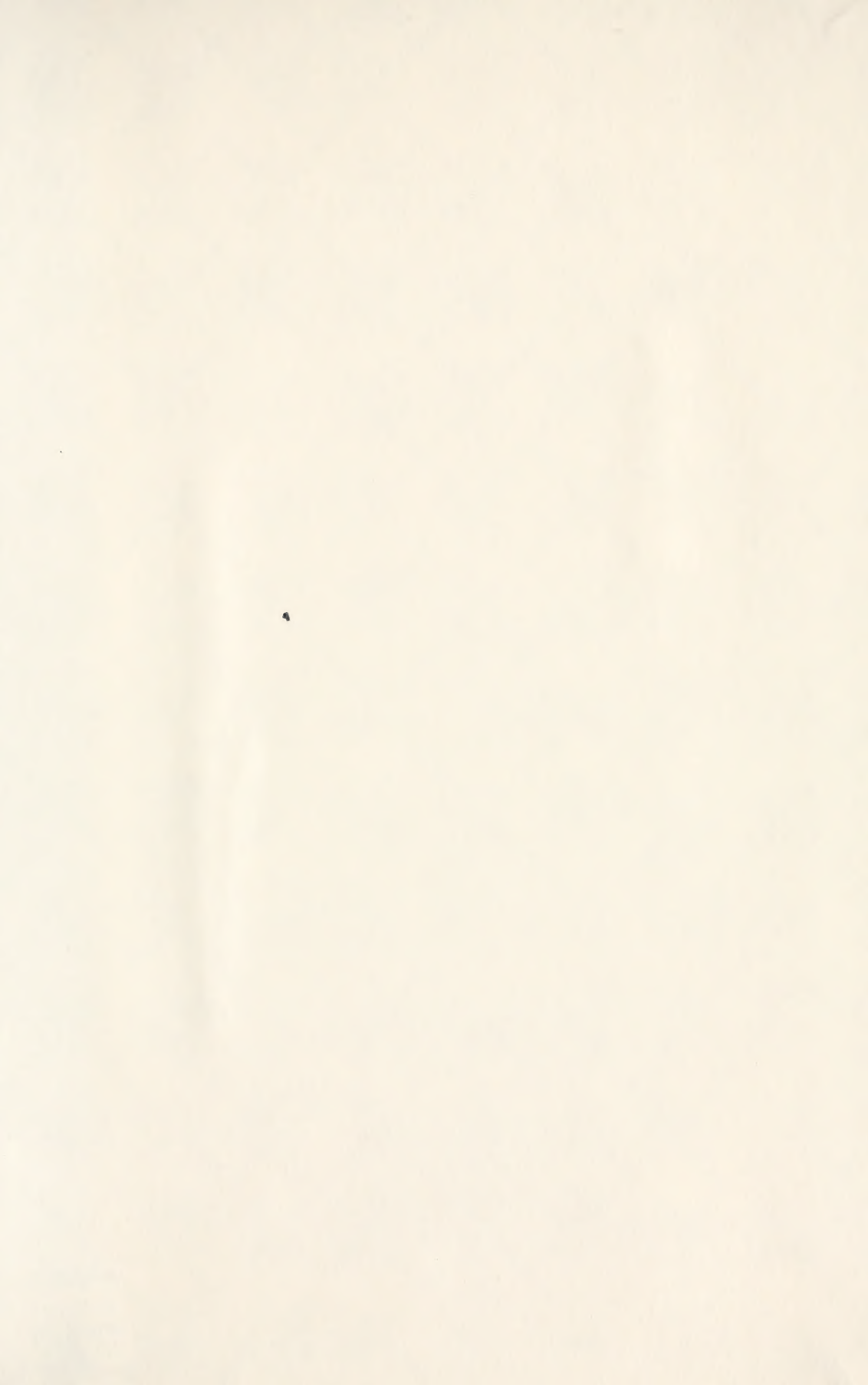
*Where shall the watchful Sun,
England, my England,
Match the master-work you've done,
England, my own?*

*When shall he rejoice again—
Such a breed of mighty men
As come forward, one to ten,
To the song on your bugles blown,
England—
Down the years on your bugles blown.*

*When shall he re-
joice again—Such
a breed of mighty
men?*



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